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INDIAN MUSIC & MEDIA

Kumari Parul P. Toliya

**Vardhaman Bharati International Foundation,
Prabhat Complex, K.G.Road, Bangalore – 56009.
“Parul , 1580, Kumaraswamy Layout, Bangalore-560078.**

INDIAN MUSIC & MEDIA
(REVIEWS IN THE MEDIA : STUDY PAPER)

By:

Kum. PARUL P. TOLIYA

M. A. Gold Medalist & 7 Award Winner

Edited by:

Kum.Kinnari P.Toliya .M.S.(Media Communications)

Ex-Lecturer,Manipal University

INDIAN MUSIC -----

REVIEWS IN THE MEDIA

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**Vardhaman Bharati International Foundation,
Prabhat Complex, K.G.Road, Bangalore – 56009.
“Parul, 1580,Kumaraswamy Layout , Bangalore-560078.
(Phone Nos:080-26667882/65953440/09845006542/09611231580)**

INDIAN MUSIC & MEDIA**By Late Kum.Parul P. Toliya****Edited By Kum. Kinnari P.Toliya****A Research Study Paper Awarded by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
Bangalore on "REVIEWS IN THE MEDIA"****MUSIC : JOURNALISM****© KINNARI for JINABHARATI****Copyright Publishers:****JINABHARATI Vardhaman Bharati International Foundation****Prabhat Complex, K.G.Road, Bangalore – 560009****Parul, 1580,Kumaraswamy Layout, Bangalore - 560078****Email: kinnaritoliya@gmail.com/ pratapkumartoliya@gmail.com****First Edition : 2013****Price : Rs.45/- Abroad U.S.\$ 2.0****→ Typoset & Printing:****→ ISBN No :**

INDIAN MUSIC & MEDIA PREFACE

This Research Study Paper, Best judged First Recipient was one of the Seven Awards of College of Communication and Management, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore in 1988, in the field of Journalism by Kum.Parul P.Toliya. Tragically, all of these Awards were received Posthumously by Parul's Family members, since she had then prematurely passed away in a Road-crossing Motor Bus Accident on 28/08/1988 and had not remained in this world then! The Press had promptly reported about this paying her glowing Tribute at that time and also soon after these Awards distributing ceremony. These Press Reports, reproduced herewith will speak for themselves.

Needless to say, this study paper possesses its importance for the students of Journalism on the subject. Its apt editing is made available again by a growing writer and journalist, a Post Graduate Lecturer at Manipal University and a learner of Indian Music. Coincidentally, she happens to be the youngest sister of Late.Kum.Parul and who had received Parul's above-mentioned Posthumous Awards.

As a father, I am proud of both of these daughters.

Hope, this small writing will be useful in a big way to those who search for it.

Bangalore.
Parul's Birthday,
31-12-2012.

Prof.PRATAPKUMAR J.TOLIYA
(E-mail:pratapkumartoliya@gmail.com)

PRESS REPORTS :

- *"RAY DIMMED": 27-02-1989, DECCAN HERALD,
Bangalore.
- *"ADIEU TO PARUL": Feb.1989, B.V.B.'s JOURNAL,
Bangalore.
- *"POFILES OF PARUL": 22-03-1992, Review in JANSATTA,
Ahmedabad.
- and a few others.....

Ray Dimmed: 27-02-1989 in DECCAN HERALD, Monday

At the 1987-88 convocation of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's College of Communication last week, Ms.Parul Toliya's name was read out seven times – for a gold medal, silver medal, cash award, rolling shield Those in the audience who didn't know her wondered for a moment why her parents and sisters received the prizes on her behalf. And then it struck them – she was no more.

Parul, an up-and-coming journalist, was fatally knocked down by a KSRTC bus on Aug. 28 last year while crossing Tumkur Road. A former student of Jyothi Nivas College, she got an MA and gold medal in Hindi from Osmania University, Hyderabad. She registered for Ph.D., at Kamatak University, Dharwad; her topic being "Contribution of Jain Saints to Hindi Literature".

Having musician-parents motivated her interest in music. She was devoted to the art – both as sitarist and Hindustani vocalist, and as a critic. She has reviewed and interviewed artistes such as Pandit Ravi Shankar, Bhimsen Joshi and Palghat Raghu for The City Tab, the local weekly whose music critic she was.

Parul's father, Mr.Pratap Kumar Toliya, is an award-winning poet, playwright and musician who often gives concerts abroad. His Jain devotional songs have appeared on many a record and cassette, and he is a scholar in Jain Philosophy, literature and culture.

Mr. Toliya was on one of his foreign concert tours when he got the news of the demise of his eldest born. Today, he plays cassettes of Parul's voice in song and recitation, talks of her hobbies – reading, writing and music – and describes incidents from her life. How she taught her youngest sister Bharatanatyam, how she secretly put away her earnings in the bank, confiding only to one of her sisters that it was for her own marriage expenses so her father may not need to stretch his purse.....

Snatches of narration, that draw a picture of quiet, thoughtful, young woman with a promising future. Someone whom Pandit Ravi Shankar described in his condolence letter as "a nice, sincere girl with a quick mind."

ADIEU TO PARUL: Feb.1989, B.V.B.'s JOURNAL, Bangalore.

This is a reminiscence to the memory of a dear departed friend in Journalist Course. Last Year, Miss.Parul P.Toliya's young (25 years) life was snuffed out in a road accident.

Beneath Parul's gentle disposition lay a brilliant intellect. An arts graduate with an additional M.A. degree in Hindi in First Class, she had been a top-notch and bagged many prizes. Besides academic honours, she was an accomplished Hindustani vocalist and instrumentalist. She had a flair for writing and was a music critic for a City tabloid.

It is an irony of fate that she is no longer with us to receive the Kulapathi's Gold Medal for having secured the highest marks in this college and Kulapathi's Silver Medal for having stood first in the Journalism course, besides three more awards this year.

I am sure all my batchmates and friends as well as our faculty members share these feelings with me and pray that her soul rest in peace. I cannot think of a better epitaph for this true Jain lady than Thomas Gray's celebrated lines: (Parenthesis mine)

A Tribute in B.V.B.'s Journal

B.G.Prasad,

Feb. 1989

Excerpt of Review in JANSATTA, Ahmedabad, 22-03-1992,

Worth-reading is the book "PROFILES OF PARUL" published about his other daughter Parul. Parul- the genius daughter of Prof.Toliya was born on 31st December 1961 at Amreli. We find in this book Parul's childhood, development of her different intellectual abilities, leaning towards Art and Religion and her achievements in the fields of Music and Journalism, etc. As a sublime Soul, Parul went off spreading her fragrance everywhere. She met a tragic premature death in Bangalore being hit in wrong side dashing Motor Bus accident while crossing the road on 28th August 1988. Details of her life and Articles of Tributes are given in the book. These consist of writings of Pandit Ravishankar and Shri Kantilal Parikh titled "Parul - A Serene Soul", which give a beautiful account of the rare achievements of the departed soul in the fields of Art and Religion. Parul was encompassing the entire nearby life into the sacred tie of divine love. Her love and feelings of equality were spreaded not only towards the human beings, but also towards entire world including birds and animals. Unusual was the spread of her Sublime Spirit. The Whole picture of Parul's soul emerging out of the complete Book is worth respect-producing. What a fate of destiny that this flower was crushed at the moment when it was growing into perfection! The photographs given in the book exactly erect the 27 years life-span and progress of a person. The reader's eye sheds tears after reading the book. May God bestow eternal peace upon that Elevated Soul!

"Triveni" Loksatta-Jansatta
by Dr. RAMANALAL JOSHI
(Editor 'UDDESH')

Ahmedabad, 22-03-1992
(Translated from Gujarati)

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I gratefully acknowledge the support and backing of my respected guide Sri.R.Seshadri, without whose kind guidance, this study paper could not have been prepared.

Bangalore

Date: 11-02-1988

Parul .P

Name : Miss. PARUL P
 Course : Journalism (Group 1)
 Roll No. : 15
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 Place : Bhavan's H.B. College of
 Communication & Management,
 Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
 Race Course Road,
 BANGALORE – 560 001.
 Date : 11-02-1988.

EVOLUTION OF MUSIC

Music is the art of expressing or stirring emotion by melodious and harmonious combination of sweet sounds. The heart responds to such music instantly and gains a pleasurable feeling, which is why man imitated the sounds of nature the song of the cuckoo and the cry of the peacock, the soft breeze rustling and ruffling tree-leaves and brooks murmuring, as well as the rhythm inherent in all of them – and created music which he sang or played on an instrument developed by him.

It is stated that music was revealed to man through sage Bharata. The earliest forms of music are the Vedic hymns or religious chants. Evolving through the centuries, taking on new dimensions as years and months merged into the entity of time, India's musical heritage has become a treasure-cove, out of which has emerged a variegated expression of melody. We have also had written commentaries on the aesthetic of music, dance and drama – sage Bharata's famous "Natya Shastra", which is evidence enough of the widely developed systems of music and dance existing as early as first century B.C.

The original scale of Indian music consisted of 22 micro tones known as "Shruties". Ancient Indian composers, with their extensive observation and uncanny sense of hearing, ascertained the different graduations of musical sound from the calls of animate nature and grouped them under 12 notes or "Swaras". Swaras form the base of Indian classical music, arranged in different combinations of five, six or seven in ascending or descending order. Based on this sequence, a "Raga" or concept of melody, has been developed. A raga has a distinct melodic pattern, a prominence of certain fixed notes and the sequence of conjugate notes that differentiate one raga from another. The musician sings or plays this raga to the accompaniment of a drone, which provides background for the musical theme and brings out fully the tonality of the music. The musician-artist normally selects ragas corresponding to the time of day or season or explores them in great detail.

Rhythm is also an essential part of music – the rhythm patterns set to different and complex beats of 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14 and 16, are called "Talas". These correspond to a uniform measure of time. The poetic wordings of a vocal rendering are composed within the frame work of a given melodic theme and "Tala" pattern. Thus, the raga embodies the very synthetics of melody, poetry and rhythm.

This music-system passed from the hands of the earliest musician, Bharata, to innumerable musically – inclined artistes, and was taken from the temple, their birth-place, to the royal court. Art-loving kings patronized such artistes and classical concerts were a regular feature at the Royal court. Soon the royal courts began disappearing, so music found another outlet for itself – the concert stage. Thus "Sangeet Sabhas" and "Sangeet Sammelans" (music concerts and conferences) became popular and through them, good musicians made their mark on people. Their recitals were eagerly awaited and people thronged concert halls to partake of their art. Anything that comes within the sphere of public viewing is also subject to analysis and censure. Thus was born "Music Criticism" or "Music Review".

Criticism is the judging of the merits of works of art. A review is a critique or a retrospective second glance at this art. As such, a music review is a critical look at a music concert or performance. A reviewer is expected to be well-versed in the intricacies of music as well as the musical scene. A reviewer normally writes for a daily newspaper, or a magazine or periodical, and is sent by the editor to view and review a particular concert. He sits through the recital, records his observations, and on returning, prepares a full fledged critique of the music he heard. The artiste's style and technique of singing or playing, his or her command over the medium, the tunes (ragas) rendered by him/her, and the artiste's growth as an artiste as well as the accompanying artistes find place in a music review.

Music criticism has existed in the Marathi press since the 1930s. Looking after these columns were knowledgeable writers and critics. But the entry of music review columns in English magazines and dailies is a comparatively recent phenomenon. They came into vogue in the 50s, and have gradually developed over the last three decades. They have been inspired by the west, where music criticism has existed for long. The credit for creating and maintaining regular "review columns" is given to the leading groups of newspapers published from Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. Today, even regional language news papers and periodicals carry them regularly.

PAPER PUBLICATION:

MUSIC REVIEW:

Instrumentalists hold sway:

BANGALORE, July 10. – In Karnatic music more instrumentalists hold sway over vocalists, because the latter's efforts are mostly mike and technique-based without being backed by a rich and resonant voice which can negotiate the three octaves effectively. Rajkumar Bharathi, a young aspirant for recognition, who gave a concert on July 5 for the Bangalore Gayana Samaja, is another case in point. Surprisingly, a very large audience turnout at the revised time of 4-15 p.m., instead of 5 p.m., might have been due as much to curiosity as to the presence of veteran accompanists T.Rukmini on the violin and Thanjavur Upendran wielding the mridangam.

The proximity to the mike and the resultant music output exposed the fact that the vocalist was neither an effective crooner nor a successful classicist – voice-wise. The mere choice of the Ata tala varnam in Kalyani and the Sri Ranga Pancharatna Krithi could not establish his classical image. “Meena lochana” in Dhanyasi was a very good choice without imparting the aesthetic experience, leaving much to the imagination of the seasoned listener. This was true of “Ranganayakam” in Nayaki. The alap of Bhairavi and the krithi “Balagopala” an old-time favourite, with neraval and swara kalpana variety was more convincing and the highlight of the concert. The four-raga based Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi (Ranjani, Sriranjani, etc) was nothing much to rave about. The jaunty pace for all the songs did not help much in enthusing the audience, though the accompanists gave him whole-hearted support. – “Saragrahi”.

Sugam Sangeet

At a seminar on sugam sangeet arranged recently by the State Sangeet Nritya Academy, it was resolved that sugam sangeet in Karnataka should envisage only Bhavageethes by Kannada poets. But the sugam sangeet programme on July 2 by Girija Narayan at the Indian Institute of World Culture included many folk songs, a bhajan and a Tillana too. In a card of 17 items, during a 90-minute recital, one was surprised to hear “Kolu kollanna kole,” a Meera Bhajan and a Tillana. No doubt Girija’s ringing voice, supported by violin (R. Somanna), sitar (A.T. Pillay) and tabla (Ashwathanarayana Rao) was heard to advantage throughout, but the mood of the different poems by eminent poets like Kuvempu, Adiga, Bendre, Dr. N.S.L. Bhatta, etc., called for suitable and meaningful voice modulation to create a better impact on the listeners, as they are “Bhavageethes” (mood poems). Girija being an experienced singer can easily attend to this aspect.

Purandara Casette

At a time when cassettes of film hits are flooding the market, a cassette of 10 select devaranamas of Purandara Dasa rendered by veteran Shimoga Subbanna released by Dr. N.S. Lakshminarayana Bhatta on July 4 at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. Mr. K.H. Srinivas, M.L.A., who presided over the function, and Pandit Seshadri Gawai paid tributes to the efforts of Subbanna and Master Recording Company, Madras, which has brought out the cassette. Earlier, Subbanna rendered evocatively “Manava janma doddadu” in the raga Anandabhairavi (a selection from the cassette with music direction by H.K. Narayana and with orchestral support).

Paper Publication: Picture of T.S.A. Mani, T. Rukmini and R. Chakravathi.

MUSIC REVIEW

Precision in form and content in violin solo:

BANGALORE, Aug. 11 – T. Rukmini, one of the top senior violinists of Karnatic music, filled the role of a soloist on Sunday evening for the Malleswaram Sangita Sabha due to the unexpected absence of Nedunuri Krishnamurthi, whom she was slated to accompany. The programme revealed that she has absorbed and assimilated the “Lalgudi technique” both as an accompanist and a soloist. It ensures precision in form and content of whatever is played, with its cerebral appeal, as the dominant factor.

Right from the opening Varnam in “Charukesi” and the invocatory “Namami Vigha Vinayaka” in Hamsadhvani, the flexing of the bow in short spells, laying accent on endnotes of each musical phrase, the repetitive four-swara clusters, all bespoke of the Lalgudi approach. The instrumental style could not bring out the lyrical excellence of Tyagaraja’s “Lavanya Rama” in Poornashadham. While there was a raga overture to all the above songs, the charm of “Abhogi” was revealed in a short alap for Gopala Krishna Bharathi’s masterpiece “Sabhapathikku Veru Daivam” for the opera “Nandanar.” The ensuing “Dinamani Vamsa” was not expansive enough to highlight “Harikamboji.”

Bhairavi was well delineated for Tyagaraja’s “Raksha Bettare”, “Rama Katha Sudharasa” in Madhyamavathi and “Mayamma” in Ahiri were the other two items which proceeded the main item Ragam (Lathangi), Taanam and a Pallavi in “Khanda Triputa” tala, with Swaramalika. In fact with closed eyes one could almost visualize a solo by the maestro himself. Such was the experience. It must be remembered that Rukmini is a vocalist of no mean order though her vocal programmes are mostly confined to radio broadcasts. The percussion solo turn between veteran T.A.S. Mani (Mridangam) and his disciple Ranganatha Chakravathi (Ghatam) before and after the pallavi were tidy and smart even as their support to the violinist was to the point and helpful – “Saragrahi”.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REVIEW AND A NEWS REPORT:

A review being a second and critical look at a performance, essentially comes after the event. The time it takes to be published, is often more than that of a news report (when news would be considered stale). Thus, freshness and immediacy are not its strong points.

The show being reviewed has already been attended by many people, hence they know what happened, but, as in sports news, a review tells something more than what the viewer saw – it is an indepth critique. Its value lies in the fact that it could indicate the readers in the intricacies of what they heard in a concert and give an expert opinion. Here it resembles sports reports. But unfortunately, the coverage given to music reviews is limited. The reasons for this are :-

1. Music performances do not occur everyday. Unless there is a music festival or a chain of such shows, they are generally spaced wide apart.
2. Newspapers do not cover all music programmes because-
 - a) the programme watched was not worth a review, which is unfortunate, because an expert opinion is never out of place, unless it is too critical or dwells on fault finding;
 - b) the artiste is not a known name – the tendency of the print media to favour known artistes for a review is not a very encouraging trend, from the view point of upcoming artistes. A review is meant to envelop all in the performing field,
 - c) the artiste has not made a personal request for a review.
 - d) despite having made a request, the editor prefers to bypass the artiste, due to his own likes and dislikes for a particular kind of music or because he prefers featuring someone known to him or because, knowing the limited readership, the editor does not want to waste time and space on unknown names;
 - e) it is not his newspaper or magazine’s policy to carry reviews. Those with futuristic policies (the Bangalore Weekly, the City Tab, for example) consider reviews not worth the trouble, because, as they say, writing on something after it has happened has no news value. Apart from throwing some light on the artiste’s strong or weak points, it does not help the readers in anyway, especially if the artiste does not appear on stage every often, is their belief.

These are many artistes themselves who are wary of reviews. Afraid of an unfavourable or frank opinion, that would talk of their shortcomings, they stay away from reviews. Their fears are not unfounded because "there have been instances in which ill-informed or biased criticism has almost ruined the future of young promising newcomers, especially those who have no godfathers or do not have the will or means to challenge the reviewer".

(Mohan Nadkarni, music critic, in his article "Is Indian classic music dying?" in *Mirror*, June 1982).

It follows naturally from this that objectivity is an essential ingredient of a review. Is it always maintained? How popular are reviews among the lay music-lover and the connoisseur? To get an answer to these and many more questions, a questionnaire was prepared and presented to a diverse group of listeners, including doctors, engineers, scientists, Managers of recording companies, singers and reviewers themselves.

The questions were as follows:

1. What kind of music interests you most?
2. How often do you attend classical or light music concerts?
3. Do you read reviews of the concerts you have attended/not attended?
4. If yes, why? To match reactions? To get the expert's opinion?
5. Are you influenced by reviews in any manner? Have they motivated you to hear the same artiste again?
6. Are you always satisfied that you took the critic's word?
7. Do you think critics do full justice to the artiste? Are they objective enough or do they give into subjective considerations?
8. News Papers or periodicals do not seem to give much importance to music reviews in terms of frequency/space. Would you prefer more coverage?
9. Reviewers have been seen to follow a set terminology and pattern: Does that satisfy you or would you opt for a change in the overall pattern that offers scope for creativity?
10. Do you think a review affects an artiste's standing in music circles, or enhances or damages an upcoming artiste's chances?
11. Would you say musicians are better qualified as critics? Would you rather they wrote reviews instead of professional critics?

80% of the group were regular concert-goers and review-readers. As curiosity to know what another person thought, spurred them on to read criticism. All of them had one grouse against reviewers, formed over a long period of time—that they did not remain objective enough in their views and were easily swept away by considerations of the stature of the artiste and his past achievements, as also their own relationship (friendly or otherwise) with the artiste.

The above group had all along looked up to a critic as an expert in his field, but had, of late, changed their opinion and preferred deciding the merits or de-merits of an artiste themselves. 2% of the nonreaders said that they didn't like being told by someone they didn't know, whether or not the artiste was good. They had their own sensibilities to help them, they said, prominent among this group being Mr. Biren Das a well-known connoisseur of Hindustani Music, and the manager of K.C. Das.

The study group also felt that the reviewers went overboard in their praise for well known names, forgetting, in their enthusiasm, to stay alert to detect lapses in the art, if any.

The group also said that reviewers followed a set pattern of words and sentences in all their criticisms, and made only minor changes in each one. The general feeling was that critics used the column as a means to show-off their command over high-flown and difficult sounding words, with the result that very little got across to the reader. A lay-listener expects to learn a lot from the review, but in the above case, the object remained unfulfilled. This explains the limited readership.

75% of the study group opted for a change in the writing pattern, so that more creativity would be allowed, since the reviews took after those in the west, the comparison naturally turned to reviews in the western press.

65% of the group opined that a critic should not pass a judgment on the performance. Writing on music, they said, should articulate the moods, the agony and ecstasy of the listener, his impression of the whole event which, though personal, would be harmless. The problem of ill-informed and motivated reviews could then be overcome.

Most of those in the study group decried the lack of professionalism in critics. Professionalism implied being well-versed in all aspects of music – its traditional history, the phases of its evolution and the contribution of great masters to music's growth over the centuries. Mohan Nadkarni, a Critic himself, called for total objectivity and an end to jargons, clichés and catch phrases.

The music – lovers also asked for greater space – allotment to coverage of music programmes. The status and importance accorded to music is evident from the fact that despite the rich tradition and wide expanse of Indian classical music, there were no music – magazines till 1986 in India. Small Institutions or groups brought out their own journals, which remained limited to circle. Books written on music found place in a few libraries and those homes which could afford them.

In 1986, a magazine by the name "Playback And Fast Forward" appeared on the Indian scene and grew popular. It deals with all aspects of music – the traditional classical heritage (both Carnatic and Hindustani), the present trend, artistes old and new, the records industry and the latest recorded products, as also with the latest electronic equipment connected with tapes and records. It covers the entire music circle in Bombay, Madras and Bengal. It also carries reviews of musical programmes. Record Album critiques are a regular feature, besides other informative articles.

The Editor of Playback and Fast Forward, Mr. Mario Pareira, felt that reviews are an essential part of the music scene. His opinion was that reviews help in maintaining a high standard of music.

Similar was the opinion of musician – Shivkumar Sharma. He said reviews must be constructive in nature. A reviewer, he said, is very much like a yogi or saint – he should be above all petty and subjective considerations. Being fair should be his aim and doing justice to the artiste, his motto.

Many other artistes feel that a constructive review can do what the concert cannot – it gives greater publicity to the musician. Which again points towards the need for a bias – free attitude.

50% of the group felt that musicians with a flair for writing would do a better job as a reviewer, because of their knowledge of all the subtle nuances of the art. The other half said that a musician would be swayed by professional jealousy and affiliation to a certain school of music, and this would colour his picture with bias. According to Mohan Nadkarni, such musician critics forget the adage, "Those who live in glasshouses should not throw stones at others", and miss out on their objectivity.

He felt the very idea of a performer becoming a critic was "unethical" and "immoral", because it would not only damage the reputation of musicians but also "Aggravate the unseemly rivalry already besting the musical profession itself", (Mirror, June 1982).

He emphasized the need for picking and choosing the right men and women, possessing the right knowledge, for this kind of work, because, news paper readers have become as "Review conscious" as they are "concert conscious" and expect the best from everyone.

Review – readers also expect, besides objectivity and in-depth analysis, language that is simple, effective and convincingly impressive. 60% of the study group stressed the need for greater creativity in review – writing which turned towards individuality and the remaining 40% asked for a style that would be universal, not individualized, so as to provide some kind of a format, acceptable to all. These people accepted that review-writing was as much of an art as music itself, hence more creativity should be allowed. What this group asked for as an amalgamation of the personal and universal styles.

The entire study group was decided on one view which said that reviews affect an artiste's standing in society, specially because music circles are not educated enough and are bound by narrow views. Thus, an adverse review can even put halt to a rising singer's career and a favourable review could sky-rocket an unknown artiste to fame. Most of those questioned asked that "Extra – Musical" interests be kept out of a fine art like music, and only music be an all pervading factor.

11% of the study group felt that a music concert did not achieve anything new but was respect of familiar songs, so as to please the audience. As far as inventions or innovations go, the concert stage provides little chance for it. When a concert is reviewed, the reviewer is also influenced by such factors as audience satisfaction and applause, which does not necessarily have to do with musical excellence. An audience does feel satisfied if the musician plays or sings a popular number. So a review of such a performance would talk of what occurred during the recital and this very often is sufficient criteria for labeling a performance and the artiste good or bad. What is forgotten here is that greatness in music does not arise out of good showmanship. In fact, more often than not, great artistes are not good concert artistes. They are concerned with their art and do not run after fame and applause.

Yet another characteristic of a review is that it reduces music to a religious expression and judges it from that view point. This is a limiting factor. Even when a musician sings about god, the music transcends the limits of "Bhakti" (devotion) and just becomes the articulation of the agony and ecstasy of a human being. Thus, if a reviewer could approach his art from different ideological view points, his sphere would take on new a dimension. This was the opinion of the aforementioned minority of the study group.

From the above study it is evident that reviewers or critics are themselves viewed with a critical eye by the readers. The readers did not seem too happy with the present trend and were desirous of a change. The only change that can be provided would be through a different format and outlook because print media is the only one that provides scope for reviews.

TV and Radio: This audio-visual and auditory media limits itself to presenting artistes through a concert. Reviewing a programme after it has taken place, is unheard of. Nor will it fit the scheme of things here. To most music-lovers, it is the impression that matters. Music plays on in their minds, long after its relay has stopped. This is how they want it to remain.

This media also has limitation of time and just about manages the relay of music programmes. Yet, some form of feedback from the listeners, not an expert, could considerably liven up such shows and provide the artiste the support he needs. This would also bridge the "Electronic gap" between the two.

Music as a means of Communication: Live musical performances are a form of audio-visual communication. Music is the end and the playing of an instrument or the singing along with gestures, forms the means to which the end is achieved. The audience find this an entity in itself. The performance tells them all they want to know about the artiste's potential and creativity.

The three basic elements of communication, namely source, message and receiver, are present in a recital. These elements are found in print media too, but the immediacy of a recital cannot be captured there.

The message in a recital is, besides the music itself, the gestures of the artiste that are capable of being interpreted meaningfully. Since the communication takes place in the place of the programme, there is no likelihood of distortion or damage, which can happen in writing.

A critic is sometimes unable to interpret the message rightly. When he writes, he tends to think of himself as an expert and there immediately is a difference in the manner in which he views the whole thing. A formality enters and this can mar his writing. In a concert, the artiste is the expert and what he presents is accepted. This is not to say that he is always a perfect person – it is the duty of the reviewer to throw light on the artiste's positive or negative points in the right manner. But for an ordinary man, word to word communication is a faster and more direct channel of information, hence preferred.

Psychological factor: A good artiste establishes a friendly rapport with the listeners, making each one a part of the performance. Thus the emotions find early release in a recital and communication is freer. Moreover, the audience go to a recital because of their leaning towards music. They are well predisposed and wish to retain the pleasure they get out of listening to a recital. They do not read a review because they do not want their pleasant memories erased. Apart from this, listeners also tend to go according to the oral reviews given by other listeners. Speech is, after all, man's major means of communication and the well spoken word effectively creating pictures in the mind, oral communication seems to be preferred to written communication. This is especially so when not all performances get written treatment in the hands of the print media.

One more reason why reviews do not enjoy much popularity is that music is a wholesome experience. It appeals to the heart, and the emotions. Such appeals are accepted more readily than appeals to the mind or reason, which is what the review tends to be. The emotional tie established by a good musician does not break down under "Critical" battering. It is a case of emotions speaking louder than words, hence the un-necessity of going back to reviews.

Apart from this, Indian music is essentially individualistic in its conception and execution. The Indian musician is both a composer and interpreter. The creative imagination gets full freedom to explore and improvise the raga but within the framework of notes and scales, is required to possess a depth of emotional commitment and personal involvement. Also a matter of participation and performance, it needs for its exposition and appreciation, a select and discerning audience. Even the most consummate master needs an actively responsive audience to give of his best. **Thus, listening to music also is an art.** Here, the regular concert goes through himself as well-versed in music enough to rely on his own sensibilities.

This above paragraph talks of individual responses to music, but such a response as would make the artiste give of his best. This is what most musicians expect out of a review. They feel feedback to their message is absolutely necessary and they always welcome an expert's opinion. It can be said in the critic's favour that some artistes look upon unfavourable reviews as a challenge and have even been spurred on to greater achievements.

Even a consummate and firmly established artiste like the **Sitar Maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar**, says that reviews are necessary, because they have been seen to keep up the high quality of music. Said he, talking of the necessity of working hard and long at one's music, "if you don't practice for a day, you (the artiste) notice it, if you don't practice for two days the critic notices it and if you don't practice for three days, the audience notices it". Thus Panditji spoke of the reviews significance, but underlying his remarks was his demand for a bias-free approach.

Reviews of recorded music: Recorded music has existed in India since 1898 when the first gramophones made their appearance. Music then was recorded on black vinyl discs which moved at 78 rotations per minute. Once the music was recorded though, it had to be pressed on to the discs and this was done in the United States, till 1908, when the first record pressing factory was established by the Gramophone Company of India Limited. The entry of recorded music was an exciting event for all music lovers and this found mention in the Marathi Press, but reviews were yet to come. Meanwhile, we also had, about one decade later, discs with 45 rotations per minute. In the early 60s the Long Play or the 33 1/3 RPM disc was produced. There is also the EP or extended play record.

Once live music shows began to be reviewed, people's eyes turned to recorded music, and slowly but surely, entered this kind of criticism where a newly released disc was heard at leisure by the reviewer and a review was given. Today we find this kind of review getting more prominence. Even general interest magazines and the Sunday magazine sections of news paper have columns akin to "Tuning in, tuning out" and "On the music Track", where records are reviewed. Magazines like 'Flair', 'Bombay', 'Society', 'Upbeat' and 'Vibes' do not carry live music reviews but record reviews are a regular feature.

In the 80s, one more dimension was added to the music recording industry – the cassette tape, which revolutionized the music scene, by taking recorded melodies to each and every home, unlike the discs, which were limited to the elite classes, because of their cost. Thus the cassette pushed records into the background and firmly established itself.

Recorded music has long storage capacity. Its owner can listen to it as and when he likes. When records and cassettes were reviewed, more and more people read this column, because it served as a guide to them as to what was released and what it contained. Thus, greater space given for reviews of albums can be easily explained. The format of some reviews is given here.

NEWS PAPER PUBLISH

The reviewer tells in a few words about the artiste and his repertoire in that particular record or cassette. The jacket cover is also printed for additional effect. Known artistes need no reviews to sell their product. Their admirers buy whatever they present. But upcoming artistes definitely benefit from reviews. It is needless to say that such reviews are found in regional language magazines and are even preferred to live music shows.

Of course, the problem of bias or subjectivity cannot be ruled out but as a guide to new releases, their importance is big. Then again, seeing the outpour of recorded music, it is not possible to cover all that is produced, and a magazine or newspaper picks out a few from the lot for a review. This means that readers remain unaware of many releases, unless they are widely advertised. Despite these limitations, it can irrefutably be said that music reviews have come to stay. **Music after all, is a great source of entertainment and relaxation.** And as it plays on, so do reviews.

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Mandolin By U.Srinivas

U. Srinivas

Lahari

Yet another treat for Carnatic music lovers in the form of a mandolin recital by U Srinivas, the prodigy from the South, has been released by Lahari Cassettes. Though Alapana and Swaraprasthavana have been kept brief through (except in 'Keeravani', Side B; the sheer excellence of rendering has made the collection immensely enjoyable.

The touch of imagination is visible even in the selection of compositions – 'Vinayaka' in Raga Hamsadhvani, followed by 'Dudugagala' and concluding with 'Mamavasada Janani' (Kannada) on Side A; A melodious 'brocheva' (Kamas), 'Ba ga ye nayya' (Chandra Jyothi) and finally the superlative 'Kaligiyunte' in Keeravani on Side B. The effortless manner in which the Bhava of Keeravani is highlighted is truly astonishing. Admirable support provided by A Kanyakumari on violin and veteran Gurveyur Dorai on mridangam (assisted by E M Subramanyam on ghatam) adds to the overall effect. 'Bhavayami' in Yaman Kalyani is appropriately subdued for the conclusion.

-----Surendran Unni

Ajay Pohankar

HMV STCS 04B 7266

Ajay Pohankar hit the music scene like a tornado as a child prodigy—a long time ago. His latest LP and cassette on EMI is that of a very mature musician. His singing has a rich cadence which bears the unmistakable influence of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. In his present offering Ajay sings a khayal in Charukeshi which has class. On the reverse side, for a start, there is a Mishra Pilu Thumri a la Bade, 'Main to hui badenam'. By way of variety Ajay offers a Hori in Des, the composition being that of Dr (Mrs.) Sushila Pohankar, Ajay's Mother. It is a charming composition charmingly sung. Ajay Pohankar rounds off the repertoire with a most satisfying Bhairavi Thumri set to Keharva. Tabla by Balkrishna and harmonium by Govindrao Patwardhan are both noteworthy.

Utsad Vilayat Khan

HMV STCS 04B 7265

The cassette features Raga Gawoti by the sitar samrat with Kumar Bose on the tabla. Side A is confined solely to the alaps in the raga while Side B takes up the gat set to teental. The maestro offers exiting moments in the delineation of this mid-afternoon melody with Kumar Bose on the tabla this reviewer found Side B more rewarding.

Thygaraja pic

DELIGHTFUL: It smiles all the way as ustad Amjad Ali Khan's sarod recital reaches a musical crescendo. And later, too, when the Spastics Society of India (Bangalore) in whose aid the maestro performed, announced that they netted Rs. two lakhs. Said Governor A.N. Banerji to a delighted audience at the Chowdiah Kalakshetra on Wednesday: Amjad Sab's is a noble soul committed to a noble cause.

Pic: Y. Nataraj

Music thenand now

(L-R) T.S.A. Mani, T. Rukmini and R. Chakravarthi

Mandolin By U Srinivas

U Srinivas

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(NB This page is duplicate typing. Only pictures to be scanned and printed.)